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**PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING OF JULY 13, 2007
MINUTES**

ATTENDANCE

Commissioner Sperring called the Planning Committee meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Other members in attendance were Commissioners Azumbrado, Chu, Giacomini, Haggerty, Halsted, Lempert, Rubin, Yeager, and Tissier.

MINUTES

The minutes of June 8, 2007 were approved unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR: a) Bay Area Congestion Management Process Update; b) Amendments to the Smart-Growth Preamble and Policies

Commissioner Lempert moved approval, Commissioner Halsted seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

TRANSPORTATION 2035: a) Draft "Three E" Principles & Goals; b) Scenario Performance Assessment

Ms. Lisa Klein stated that staff is recommending provisional approval on eight goals that correspond with Economy, Environment, and Equity. Six of the goals are carried over with updates from the current Transportation 2030 Plan – one of which is the safety goal, which includes maintenance of the existing transportation system. The two new goals are security and climate protection.

She stated that staff is also recommending provisional approval on the performance assessment that is used to develop the vision portion of Transportation 2035. She noted that this effort is closely related to Economy, Environment, and Equity as well as all of the goals. Recommended targets are congestion, VMT reduction, and emission reduction. Staff has not yet identified targets for equity and will work with stakeholders in August to do so. The next step is to look at three investment scenarios to see how close they would get to reach the target. The step after would be to look at the impact of land use and pricing policies in conjunction with those investment scenarios to see again how close they get to the target. Ms. Klein stated that the results will be reported to the Joint MTC/ABAG Fall Forum in October, and following that staff will come back to the Commission to seek direction on the next steps.

Lastly, she stated staff has more work to do to define the equity target. Three areas of interest are: 1) Proximity and Access, 2) Public Health, and 3) Affordability and Cost. Staff's next step is to meet with a small group of individuals – both representatives of the Partnership and MTC's Advisory Committee and other stakeholders – to discuss in more detail.

Commissioner Spring requested clarification on the maintenance of the system. Ms. Therese McMillan stated that maintaining and sustaining the existing system is integral to the very first goals that are listed in terms of safety. She noted that staff will put more thought as to capturing more clearly the goals of a well-maintained system, what it does, and how it links to the investment priorities that will be addressed.

Ms. Ashley Nguyen summarized the outreach activities. She noted that staff has consulted with partner agencies, MTC advisory committees, JPC and the general public on the visioning effort. Three Early Dialogue Workshops were held to solicit feedback on the vision approach, goals and scenario performance assessment. This was followed by a joint meeting of the three MTC advisory committees, and an evening regional workshop that drew over 60 participants.

The messages heard regarding the goals was the “Fix It First” policy for maintaining the roads and transit systems, which should be the priority objective for the region. Many felt that the plan should pay greater attention to safety for bike/peds, aging population, and public health impacts of particulate matter. There continues to be a great deal of support for advancing smarter, more focused growth as envisioned in FOCUS, but not at the cost of diverting scarce funding away from maintenance needs.

The messages heard regarding the scenarios was support for the visioning approach and scenario performance assessment. Staff also heard some concerns, including that the performance targets are not addressing all the goals, particularly the safety and maintenance goals. Equity is a cross cutting issue across all the goals, and staff needs to do more work to address equity concerns in the scenario assessment.

Staff heard several ideas for the investment packages – ranging from a package that maximizes reductions in VMT or emissions to a package that regroups the HOT lanes with express bus and freeway operational strategies to a package that focuses solely on local transit improvements.

Ms. Nguyen stated that both the CMA Directors and Transportation Authority of Marin have submitted their comment letters to the Commission for consideration.

Ms. Lisa Klein and Ashley Nguyen requested the committee’s provisional approval of the Transportation 2035 goals and the performance assessment process that will be used to develop the vision.

Ms. Dianne Steinhauser, Transportation Authority of Marin, expressed their support the staff recommendations, and noted that they will continue to work with staff regarding some of the key principles with respect to the scenarios relationship to the goals, comprehensive nature of performance measures, the inclusion of local congestion relief, and maintenance of the existing system.

Commissioner Lempert asked staff if the goal reflecting 20% reduction in congestion is realistic. Ms. Klein stated the target comes from the Governor’s Strategic Growth Plan. Staff cannot say, at this point, how achievable or unachievable it is, and this is a main reason for conducting the

analysis. She noted two of the scenarios are very transit heavy, providing an opportunity to look at what can be achieved by enhancing transit service.

Commissioner Tissier proposed two minor corrections on the principles and goals: 1) For intercity rail – make it broader and not to make it so specific to intercity, and 2) If MTC is going to help with auto and bicycle loans, that it be stated within “reasons for revisions” instead of “proposed revision”. It is important that if MTC is going to take this on that it is specifically for licensed drivers and loans are made for cars in which insurance has been secured.

Commissioner Yeager asked whether the safety goal was sufficiently detailed, particularly with respect to identifying resources needed to address bicycle safety concerns. Ms. Therese McMillan stated that the goals give staff sufficient direction, but when the actual policy comes to the table to implement the goals, that is where staff can get to a lot of the specifics that the Commission outlines.

Commissioner Spring called for public comment. Mr. David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF, stated that the scenario assessment that has been proposed by staff is not going to produce what is needed. TRANSDEF suggested an approach that looks at two scenarios, one of which is what the CMA Directors want, and the other would be a maximum effort to reduce the VMT - reduce the greenhouse gas emissions scenario. Mr. Carter Mau, BART, expressed BART’s support of MTC’s approach to construct a vision and the goals proposed. Mr. Mau briefly summarized BART’s letter submitted to MTC. Ms. Sabrina Merlo, Bay Area Bicycle Coalition, commended staff on their work articulating the goals, and noted that it will be crucial to follow this up with project a selection criterion that supports this vision and goals. Mr. Andy Thornley, Bay Area Bicycle Coalition, stated that MTC needs to make bicycling the proper regional mode, and noted that being able to bring people to and through regional transit and to and across regional bridges on bikes is a very important way to support these goals. Mr. Robert Rayburn, East Bay Bicycle Coalition, stated that their walking and bicycling goal is consistent with MTC’s Regional Transportation Plan goals to reduce congestion, reduce VMT, and reduce emissions. They believe that the CMAs are right in seeking a comprehensive approach. He stated that staff needs to include safe routes to schools and safe routes to transit projects. Mr. Martin Engelmann, CCCTA, stated that the Contra Costa Transportation Authority is still looking at the principles and goals and will be submitting a letter prior to the upcoming Commission meeting.

Mr. Doug Kimsey responded to Mr. Schonbrunn’s comments. He stated that the TRANSDEF alternative was evaluated and embodies many of the things that staff was already going to assess as part of the scenario assessment. Staff will be looking at land use sensitivity, and a heavy transit investment scenario, which both were part of the TRANSDEF alternative.

Commissioner Azumbrado asked if there was consideration to putting costs as one of the basic goals under Economy that staff can start to define what is an appropriate cost limit for transportation based on per capita of revenues of California. Ms. McMillan stated that under federal and state law MTC has been compelled to look at a narrower subset of that which is the financial constraint. Staff takes the resources from government and works from there.

Commissioner Halsted moved approval, Commissioner Lempert seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

REGIONAL RAIL PROGRESS REPORT: a) Regional Rail Plan

Ms. Ashley Nguyen reported on the progress made thus far on the Regional Rail Plan. She stated that the study team has worked diligently over the past 24 months to develop the Regional Rail Plan with several overarching goals in mind: 1) Develop the BART system as the core metro transit system; 2) develop the regional rail system as the long-distance commute/intercity system; 3) develop a new governance structure for the regional rail system to support operational issues (dispatching, speed and signals) and right-of-way acquisitions; 4) provide interconnectivity with each of the rail systems at major transfer points; and 5) grade separate the rail and highway system along major corridors.

She summarized a number of planning activities that have occurred during the study effort, including: 1) a series of regional workshops were held in late November/early December 2005 to solicit early input on the study purpose/need, rail project ideas, and potential evaluation criteria; 2) the Steering Committee met four times thus far to discuss the study process, public outreach plans, study purpose/need, network definitions of the twelve study alternatives, and ultimately narrowing of network alternatives down to two regional rail alternatives (assuming no HSR); 3) two workshops with General Managers and board members from ACE, Caltrain, BART, Capital Corridor, and SMART were held in March and July 2007; 4) the Planning Committee reviewed the public outreach summary in December 2005 and received a presentation of the twelve study alternatives in May 2006; and 5) various stakeholder meetings were held with passenger and freight rail operators to discuss technical issues associated with the network alternatives, and attended numerous city/county staff and board/council meetings as requested.

Ms. Nguyen stated that the immediate next step is for the study partners to identify the most promising high-speed rail alignments over the Altamont Pass and Pacheco Pass, and make recommendations on the most promising combinations of regional rail and high-speed rail alignments over these corridors.

Mr. Brent Ogden, Consultant, summarized the phase implementation strategy for Regional Rail as well as the governance.

Commissioner Spering noted that he would like to see a totally independent body look at the existing systems and make a recommendation as to some type of governance.

Commissioner Spering called for public comment. Mr. David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF, would like more information on how the decision-making was done with the alternatives. He believes having only one alternative that does not include high-speed rail results in a dysfunctional study.

In closing, Ms. Nguyen stated that the study team plans to release a draft summary report on the phased Regional Rail implementation strategy in late July. A Steering Committee meeting will be held in late July to discuss the draft summary report, and the study team will host three regional workshops in mid-August. MTC staff plans to return to this Committee in September to review and refer the Regional Rail Plan to the Commission for adoption.

b) Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Rail

Mr. Dan Leavitt, Consultant, presented a short video on high-speed rail, and summarized the preliminary findings of their report.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 13, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, CA.